



50 idioms

For IELTS Speaking



Set 1

Common Idioms	Definitions
It cost me an arm and a leg to take my trip to Australia.	<i>Very expensive</i>
I was over the moon when he asked me to marry him.	<i>Extremely pleased or happy</i>
You are taking your IELTS test next week?? Aren't you jumping the gun . You've only just started studying.	<i>Doing or starting something too early</i>
He comes round to see me once in a blue moon .	<i>Happening very rarely</i>
He's got a chip on his shoulder .	<i>Feeling inferior or having a grievance about something</i>
I reckon getting a band 7 in IELTS will be a piece of cake ! I'm very good at English.	<i>Very easy</i>
The money sent by comic relief to help poverty in Africa is just a drop in the ocean . They need far more than this.	<i>A very small part of something much bigger</i>
Getting a low score the first time I took IELTS was a blessing in disguise . It forced me to study extremely hard so I got a much better score the next time.	<i>Something positive that isn't recognized until later</i>
We have to actually do something about global warming. Actions speak louder than words .	<i>It's better to actually do something rather than just talking about it</i>
I bumped into Jenny in town the other day. It's a small world .	<i>Meeting someone you would not have expected to</i>

Set 2

Common Idioms	Definitions
Oh well, I got 5.5 in IELTS again. Back to the drawing board!	<i>When an attempt to do something fails and it's time to start all over again using different methods</i>
I hate my job so much I can't bare going to work, but if I quit I don't think I can get another job. I'm really stuck / caught between a rock and a hard place.	<i>Having two very bad choices.</i> <i>(note: stuck/caught can be omitted)</i>
I have to bite my tongue so I don't say what I really think of him!	<i>Wanting to say something but stopping yourself.</i>
Come on, cut to the chase. We haven't got all day!	<i>Leave out all the unnecessary details and just get to the point</i>
Are you putting all of your savings into that company? Don't put all your eggs in one basket.	<i>Putting all of ones resources into one possibility</i>
Try not to worry about it. Every cloud has a silver lining.	<i>Believing that every bad situation has a positive side / eventually leads to something good</i>
It was difficult when I moved to another country but I eventually found my feet.	<i>To become comfortable in what you are doing</i>
My parents are very fixed in their ways. They won't start using the internet.	<i>Not wanting to change from the normal ways of doing things</i>
I think he got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning. He is in a terrible mood.	<i>To refer to someone who is having a bad day</i>
My mother will always go the extra mile to help people.	<i>Doing much more than is required when doing something</i>

Set 3

Common Idioms	Definitions
I think you've hit the nail on the head . That's the reason he didn't get the job.	<i>Say exactly the right thing</i>
Today's going so badly. If it's not one thing, it's the other .	<i>When everything seems to be going wrong</i>
I just said it in the heat of the moment . I was angry. I know I shouldn't have.	<i>Saying or doing something suddenly without thinking about it</i>
Keep an eye on him . I think he may cheat in the exam.	<i>Watch someone or something carefully</i>
Have you heard? John down the road has kicked the bucket .	<i>Died</i>
I don't want to argue with him again. It's better to let sleeping dogs lie .	<i>Avoid a conflict</i>
I told him what gift you have bought him for his birthday. Sorry, I didn't mean to let the cat out of the bag .	<i>Tell someone something that you were not supposed to</i>
Don't tell her what you really think of her if she's helping you with your English! Don't bite the hand that feeds you .	<i>Hurt or upset someone who is helping you</i>
I'm not sure which party he is going to vote for. He's sitting on the fence .	<i>Not making a firm decision between different choices</i>
Everything she does is very over the top . She can't just have a few drinks – she has to get really drunk.	<i>Excessive</i>

Set 4

Common Idioms	Definitions
Let's keep studying for IELTS. Practice makes perfect.	<i>Continuously doing something to improve</i>
Don't get upset about what he said. He's just pulling your leg.	<i>Joking around</i>
Sorry but I think I'll take a rain check on that.	<i>To decline an offer that you will take up later</i>
As a rule of thumb , I don't study at weekends. I spend the time with my family.	<i>Principal that is strictly adhered / kept to</i>
I can smell a rat . He said he has a PhD but he can't even remember which university he studied at.	<i>To sense that something is not right</i>
She's the spitting image of her mother.	<i>To look exactly like someone else</i>
The ball's in your court now. What are you going to do?	<i>Telling someone it's now their turn to make a decision</i>
Unfortunately I think he'll be studying for IELTS until the cows come home . His English is very poor.	<i>For a very long time</i>
It was all tongue-in-cheek . He didn't really mean what he said.	<i>Something said in humour rather than seriously</i>
She's feeling under the weather today so she won't be going to work.	<i>Unwell</i>

Set 5

Common Idioms	Definitions
We've had some big disagreements over the years, but it's all water under the bridge now. We get on fine.	<i>Things from the past that are not important anymore</i>
You are what you eat so it's better to have a healthy diet.	<i>If you eat bad food, you'll be unhealthy, if you eat good food, you'll be healthy</i>
You can't judge a book by its cover. I need to get to know him before I decide what he is like.	<i>The belief that outside appearances do not reveal what someone or something is really like</i>
We're really working against the clock now. We must hurry.	<i>Not having enough time to do something</i>
Why are we bothering? We're flogging a dead horse . Our online business is making no money, so we should move on and do something else.	<i>Attempting to continue with something that is finished / over</i>
I bent over backwards to help him. I hope he appreciates it.	<i>Doing all you can to help someone</i>
So you have the IELTS test today?? Break a leg .	<i>Good luck</i>
Ok, I'm playing devil's advocate here, but if marijuana is legalized, isn't it more likely young people will smoke it?	<i>To put forward a side in an argument that may not be your own in order to show the counter-argument / ensure all sides are discussed</i>
Hold your horses! We haven't won anything yet.	<i>Telling someone who is getting ahead of themselves to wait / be patient</i>
She is driving me up the wall . She won't stop talking.	<i>Annoying or irritating somebody</i>